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MEMORANDUM

212

DATE: 11 August 1961
TO: The Vice President
FROM: Colonel Burris
RE: Action Against Cuba

DECLASSIFIED

Authority State La 5/28/77

By MJG, NARS, Date 4/18/77

Mr. William S. White wrote recently in the Star on "How to Put Squeeze on Castro" (clipping attached). Mr. White makes two proposals:

1. Economic blockade of Cuba.
2. Permanent resettlement of refugees.

The demand for some form of action against Castro invariably leads to economic action, since all reasonable proposals exclude direct military action. Mr. White has therefore aligned himself with those supporting the popular notion that an economic blockade will affect Castro to a substantial degree.

Intelligence records reflect that Cuba has been extremely successful in filling the trade gap caused by near termination of US-Cuban trade. In the first-half of 1961, despite shortages of some goods, Cuban imports approximated peak 1958 tonnages. More than 80% of these imports were supplied from the Communist bloc. Khrushchev has further promised Castro additional supplies which he may require. This could amount to as much as \$200 million per year in order to satisfy Castro's one-billion dollar program through 1965.

The proposed economic blockade can be no more than an embargo because of the legality of the issue, as Secretary Rusk pointed out to Admiral Burke. Further, this action will simply force the completion of Castro's dependence on the communists while at the same time render him a kind of hero in the eyes of certain Latin Americans. He is already considered ingenious and courageous by some Latinos as an individual who stood up to the US and who does not have to rely upon any form of association with this country. Unfortunately, this appealing adventure is viewed by all-too-many Latin and South Americans as an effort toward social justice with little or no regard on acceptance of the insidious communist motivations.

These reports do not attempt to prove that a complete embargo should not be invoked against Castro, but rather they highlight the results of action so far.

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